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Jan 1st, 12:00 AM

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Mackenzie Downs
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Downs, Mackenzie, "transforming from inside out" (2014). *International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) Annual Conference Proceedings*. 65.

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transforming from inside out

Mackenzie Downs, Iowa State University

Keywords: knitwear, crochet, felting

The ideas behind transforming from inside out stemmed from my desire to learn and expand on my knitting skills. I initiated an independent study with Dr. Sanders in knitwear for the Spring 2014 semester. One of my primary interests for my future career is in fully-fashioned knits, which is what encouraged the independent study to begin with. In writing out the syllabus for the course, it was decided that I was to complete one project knitted by hand, one project knitted on the knitting machine, and one project cut and sewn. This dress is the product of the project knitted on a machine. Through completing this project, I learned how to use a knitting machine, gained a better understanding of knit garments, and developed additional skills in yarn manipulation.



The design of the tank dress originated from countless silhouette sketches. I knew I wanted to keep the shape of the dress simple and clean, and I originally intended to apply polka dots in a contrasting color to achieve a more dynamic, 3-dimensional shape. Through conversing with my instructor, the idea of crocheting circles and felting them before application was planted in my mind. The gradual shift from polka dots to a more organic, unstructured design occurred as the project, season change, and semester progressed. Initially, I developed a set of measurements for the dress shape and created a swatch of the yarn on the knitting machine to determine the number of stitches per inch. The next step in the process involved patternmaking using the DesignKnit software for both the front and back of the dress.

Primary materials used in the dress are a 4-ply 100% cotton yarn and a single ply 85% mohair/15% wool yarn. The cotton yarn forms the body of the dress in a stockinette produced on the knitting machine.

Increases and decreases were utilized in the pattern to create shaping. Knitting began at the sweep and continued to the neck drop. At the neck drop, each side of the garment was completed one at a time, first the left, and then the right. Two separate pieces were knitted, the dress front

and dress back. The two pieces were then stitched together using a tapestry needle at the sides. All edges of the dress are crocheted one row to create a clean, sharp edge. The hemline at the sweep has two rows crocheted. The 32 circles applied to the dress are double crocheted in a circle one time around with the mohair/wool yarn. The circles were put through a wash cycle in the home washing machine with warm water and air-dried to achieve the felted look. The circles are stitched to the dress body from the center of each circle. The final garment was completed on May 25, 2014. Final length 27", waist 12", shoulder to shoulder 11".



The contributions made to the Apparel Design field are primarily within the program of study at Iowa State University and, on a more personal level, in my own education. Before completing my independent study course in knitwear, I had no previous experience with knitting by hand or by machine and had only small experiences with cut and sew knit garments. The Apparel Merchandising & Design program at Iowa State is heavily focused on woven garments. While I appreciated the courses in wovens, I hope my interest in knitwear and completion of an independent study can help inspire other students to learn about knits and lay the groundwork for more incorporation of knits into the course of study. All in all, I have reached my goal of learning the basics of knitting, knowledge on how to operate a knitting machine, crocheting, and felting with the intent of utilizing these new skills while executing my senior line in my capstone apparel class this semester, Fall 2014.